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Energy and Technology Committee

March 6, 2008

Testimony of Martin Mador

In Favor of

HB 5787 AAC Connecticut's Economic, Energy and Climate Security

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the Legislative and Political Chair of the Connecticut Sierra Club, and am here today representing our 10,000 Connecticut members concerned about the health of our environment. I possess a Master's of Environmental Management degree from Yale.

HB 5787 would create a new Department of Clean Energy, replacing the Renewable Energy Investments Board. Connecticut several decades ago had a sizeable staff working on energy issues, including renewable energy. About 86 people worked in a separate division of OPM. That work force has been reduced to 10 people in a unit with OPM, plus the staff at CEF.

Energy has become an critical issue for all sectors of the state. We are faced with exponentially rising costs and the possibility of shortages. The burning of fossil fuels is now directly implicated in the release of greenhouse gases and the global warming crisis. Over the coming years, the state will have to cope with the economic consequences of energy pricing and the need to reduce greenhouse gases.

The state will require a cadre of expert agency staff to conduct research and set policy for the public sector, as well as assist the private sector. Expertise, research, and regulatory functions should be placed within a single agency. It is essential that we take steps now to establish that necessary resource.

Sierra strongly recommends that this Committee take the opportunity to create this agency by approving HB 5787.